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**image**

**28**  
FEB

DIGITAL  
EDITION

# SPAWN®



**McFARLANE**  
QUINN



**image** COMICS PRESENTS:

# "PROTECTOR"



story

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art

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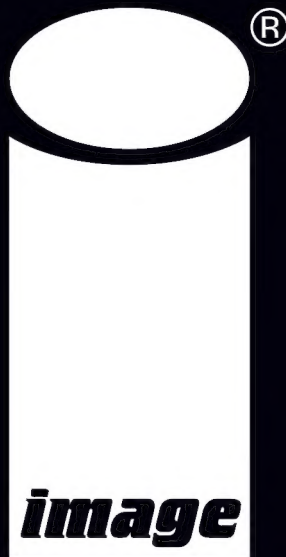
Dedicated to:  
**TERRY AUSTIN**

FOR IMAGE COMICS

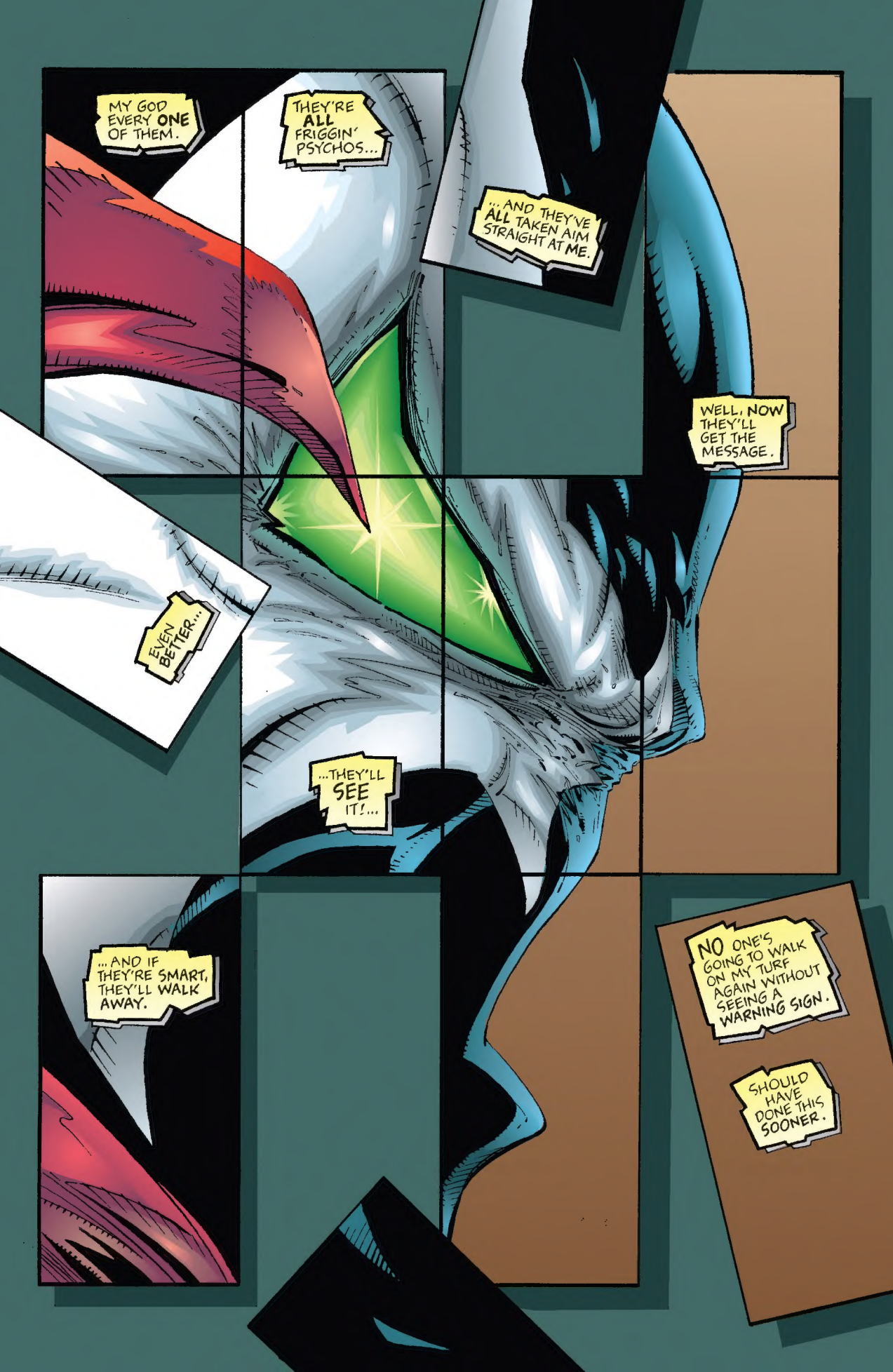
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**image**



MY GOD  
EVERY ONE  
OF THEM.

THEY'RE  
ALL  
FRIGGIN'  
PSYCHOS...

...AND THEY'VE  
ALL TAKEN AIM  
STRAIGHT AT ME.

WELL, NOW  
THEY'LL  
GET THE  
MESSAGE.

EVEN  
BETTER...

...THEY'LL  
SEE  
IT!...

...AND IF  
THEY'RE SMART,  
THEY'LL WALK  
AWAY.

NO ONE'S  
GOING TO WALK  
ON MY TURF  
AGAIN WITHOUT  
SEEING A  
WARNING SIGN.

SHOULD  
HAVE  
DONE THIS  
SOONER.



SINCE HIS RETURN FROM THE GRAVE, THIS MAN, NOW CALLED SPAWN, HAS BEEN HUNTED.

AND HOUNDED. AND BEATEN. AND **SHOT AT.**

HE'S BECOME LIKE A RAGING BULL PENNED UP TOO LONG. ANGER HAS BEEN SMOLDERING DEEP INSIDE AND HE'S READY TO EXPLODE. THIS MAN ONCE TRAINED TO BE SO RATIONAL IN HIS EVERY MOVE.


LORD HAVE MERCY ON THE NEXT FOOL TO CROSS HIS PATH.

YOU SHALL **DIE** FOR THIS!!

SHUT UP.





A comic book page featuring Hellspawn, a character with a black mask, red cape, and blue suit, standing in a ruined city. He is surrounded by debris and a large, green, mechanical demon in the background. The scene is dark and atmospheric, with a focus on the character's dialogue and the surrounding destruction.

WATCH  
YOUR *TONE*,  
HELLSPAWN. MY  
TIME WILL COME.  
THOUGH YOU MAY  
HAVE BROKEN ME  
PHYSICALLY, MY  
*SPIRIT* HAS  
BEEN  
FORTIFIED.

I'VE *SEEN*  
THE ERROR OF  
MY WAYS. RELIED  
FAR TOO HEAVILY  
ON THE LORD.  
HE'S *FORSAKEN*  
ME. I UNDER-  
STAND THAT  
NOW.

EVEN  
AFTER ALL  
I'VE GIVEN OF  
MYSELF, I  
SHALL NEVER  
ENTER HIS  
KINGDOM.

SO I  
CAST AWAY  
MY ALLEGIANCE.  
IT'S TIME TO FIGHT  
MY BATTLES *ALONE...*  
AND MY WAR STARTS  
WITH *YOU*, DEMON.  
THOUGH YOU'VE  
TAKEN A HUMAN  
SHAPE, I KNOW  
WHAT YOU  
ARE...

...WHERE YOU  
COME FROM.

LIKE ME,  
YOU HAVE  
ALSO BEEN  
CURSED.

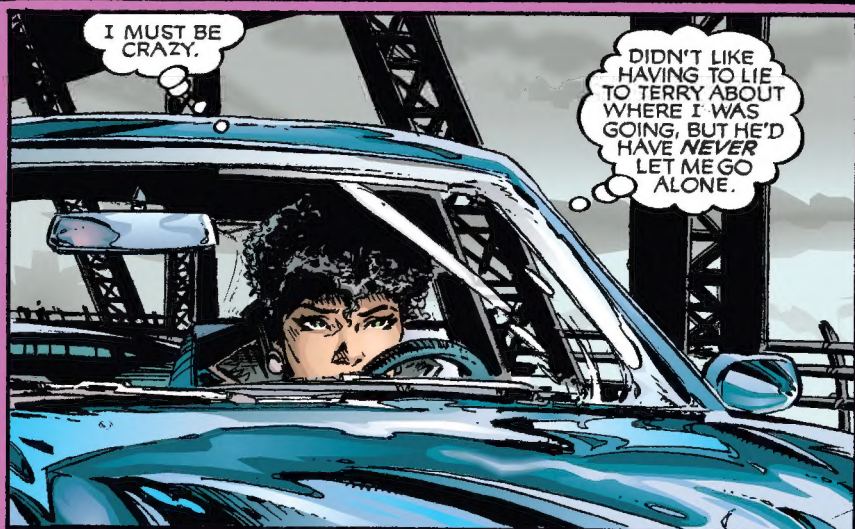
IT  
SADDENS  
ME THAT  
I MUST  
KILL  
YOU.

DO  
YOU  
HEAR  
ME?



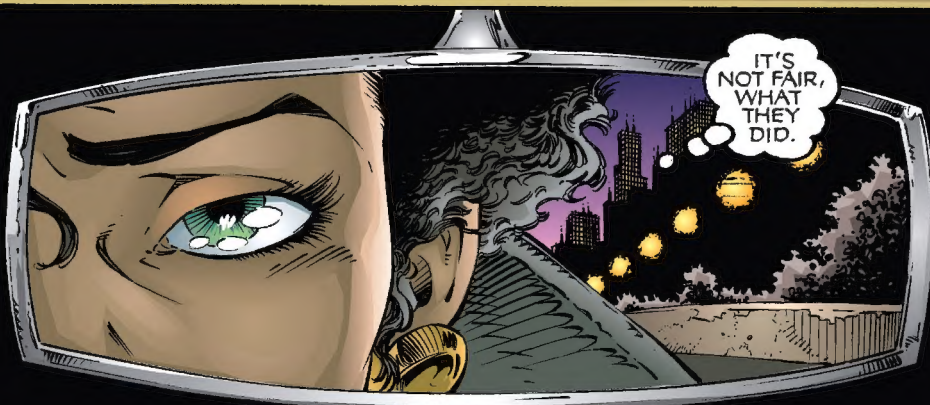
AS CLOUDS GATHER FOR AN IMMINENT RAINFALL, WANDA DRIVES ACROSS THE TRIBOROUGH BRIDGE INTO NEW YORK CITY.

SHE MUSES HOW THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SHE'S TAKEN THE CAR INTO THE BIG APPLE.



? **A**N IRONIC QUESTION, CONSIDERING THAT HER FIRST HUSBAND, AL SIMMONS, WAS KILLED... AND IS NOW THE VERY ONE WHOM SHE IS IN SEARCH OF.





"HE'S HAD TO **ENDURE** SO MUCH, SINCE HIS OWN **FRIENDS** AT THE AGENCY TURNED ON HIM. I KNOW **THAT'S** REALLY EATING AT HIM.

"HIS INJURIES ARE STILL BOTHERING HIM, BUT HE'S PUTTING ON A STRONG SHOW FOR ME AND CYAN.

"PLUS, HE'S TRYING TO DEAL WITH HIS SO-CALLED CO-WORKERS AGAIN, AS IF THEY HADN'T BEEN SPYING ON HIM IN CONJUNCTION WITH **OTHER** AGENCIES.

"IF THE MOB WANTED HIM DEAD, THAT MAKES **SOME** SENSE, BECAUSE THEY'RE THE BAD GUYS..."



"...BUT BY HIS OWN **PEOPLE**...! THEY'RE **SUPPOSED** TO BE ON **HIS** SIDE. DAMN THEM ALL.

"I **KNOW** IT'S TAKING A TOLL ON TERRY, NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE TRIES TO HIDE IT. I'VE CAUGHT HIM A COUPLE OF TIMES, JUST STARING OFF INTO THE DARKNESS. HE LOOKED SO... **BROKEN**.

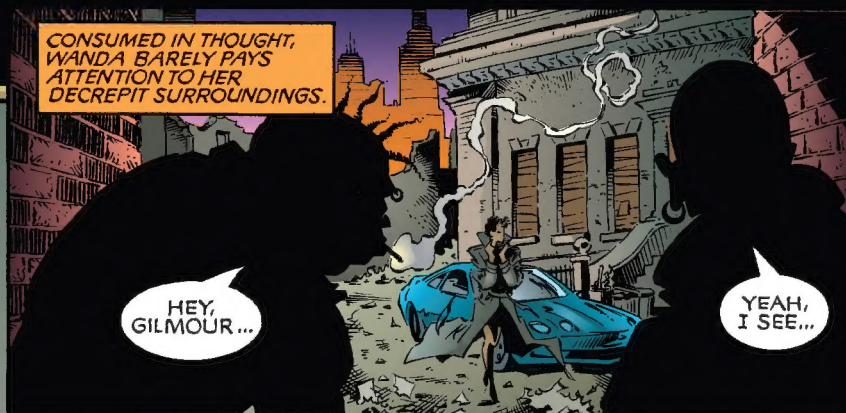
"HE'D BE DEAD IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT **SPAWN**. I NEED TO KNOW WHY **HE** CAME TO TERRY'S RESCUE, WHILE EVERYONE **ELSE** HAD TURNED THEIR BACKS.\*

"TERRY WORKS IN AN **OFFICE**, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE. WHERE COULD HE HAVE **MET** ANYONE LIKE THAT?"



\*ISSUES  
21 TO 24  
--Tom.


CONSUMED IN THOUGHT,  
WANDA BARELY PAYS  
ATTENTION TO HER  
DECREPIT SURROUNDINGS.












IT WASN'T THAT SHE WAS TIMID, OR A PRUDE-- JUST VERY FOCUSED ON THE PERSONAL PATHS SHE WANTED TO WALK.


RAISED IN A CLOSE NEIGHBORHOOD, WANDA HAD RARELY STRAYED FROM THE WATCHFUL EYES OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

EVEN IN COLLEGE SHE WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT HER AFTER-HOUR ACTIVITIES.



PUTTING HERSELF IN SUCH POTENTIAL DANGER NOW SHOWS THE DEPTH OF HER COMMITMENT TO HELPING HER HUSBAND.

AS THE NIGHT AIR'S TEMPERATURE BEGINS TO DROP, HER HEARTBEAT INCREASES.



FLINCHING AT EVERY SOUND AND MOVEMENT, SHE KEEPS TELLING HERSELF THAT IT'S ALL JUST HER IMAGINATION RUNNING AWAY WITH HER.

NOT QUITE.





KEE  
KEE  
HEEEE.

Oooh...  
THIS JUST  
**KILLS** ME.  
BRIBES. POLITICAL  
FAVORS. CALL GIRLS.  
THIS FILE'S FILLED  
WITH ENOUGH  
INFO TO FRY  
CHIEF BANKS TO  
A CRISP.

LIFE  
IS  
**GOOD!**



THOUGH I DO ADMIRE  
YOUR VIRTUOSO FLAIR FOR  
**GLOATING**, I HAVE ONE  
SMALL QUESTION, SIR.

SHOOT.

I THOUGHT YOU  
SAID THAT SPAWN WANTED  
THIS DELIVERED TO THE CHIEF  
SO HE'D PULL THE TROOPS  
OFF THEIR SEARCHES OF  
THE ALLEYS. \* YOU KNOW,  
A SIMPLE BLACK-  
MAIL THING.

YOU'RE  
ABSOLUTELY  
RIGHT.

WELL, ISN'T  
SPAWN GOING TO  
BE A BIT **PERTURBED**  
WITH YOU FOR NOT  
DOING AS HE  
ASKED?

# ISSUE 24...Tom.



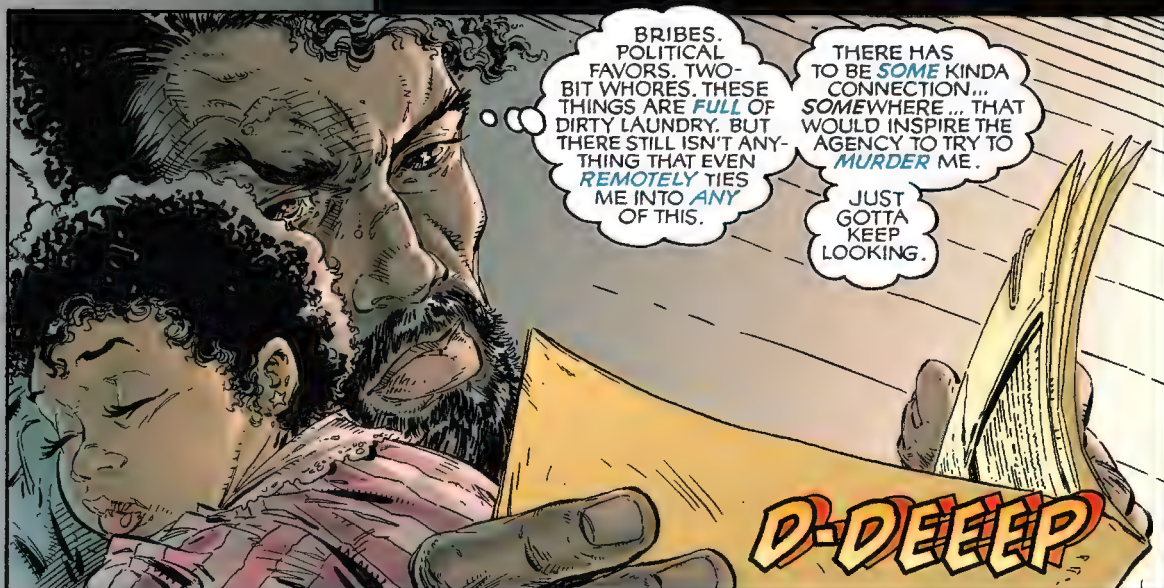
Aww -  
**LIGHTEN UP,**  
TWITCH. THE  
CHIEF'S BEEN A PAIN  
IN MY REAR FOR YEARS.  
NOW I'VE FINALLY GOT  
SOMETHING THAT'LL  
MAKE HIM **BACK**  
OFF. AIN'T NO WAY  
I'M GOING...

UH?!

**CRIPES!**  
I DON'T  
BELIEVE IT!  
THIS CAN'T BE  
**TRUE!** NO  
ONE'S THAT  
SICK!

WE'LL HAVE TO  
WAIT TO FIND  
OUT WHAT IT IS.





BRIBES. POLITICAL FAVORS. TWO-BIT WHORES. THESE THINGS ARE **FULL** OF DIRTY LAUNDRY. BUT THERE STILL ISN'T ANYTHING THAT EVEN **REMOVELY** TIES ME INTO **ANY** OF THIS.

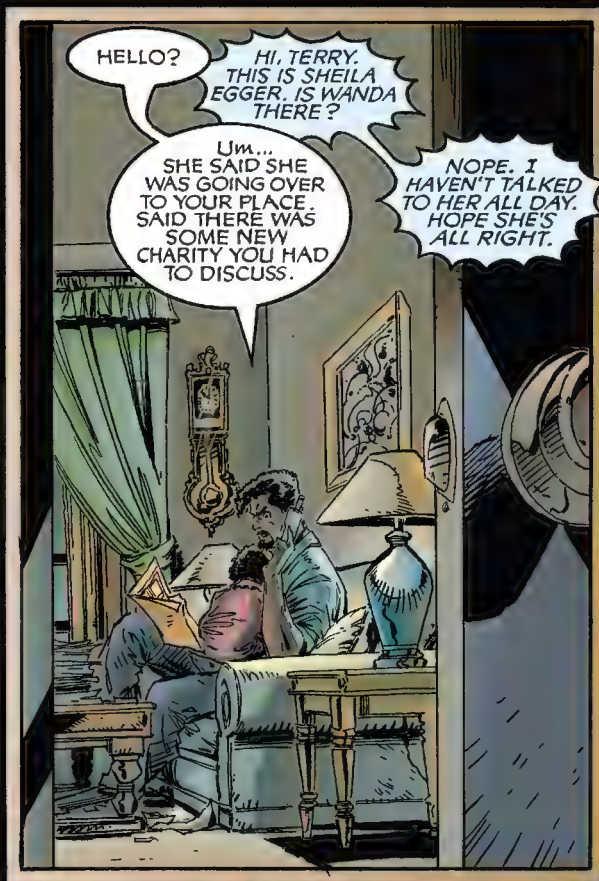
THERE HAS TO BE **SOME** KINDA CONNECTION... **SOMEWHERE** ... THAT WOULD INSPIRE THE AGENCY TO TRY TO **MURDER** ME.

JUST GOTTA KEEP LOOKING.

**D-DEEEP**



**D-DEEEP**



HELLO?

HI, TERRY. THIS IS SHEILA EGGER. IS WANDA THERE?

Uhm... SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING OVER TO YOUR PLACE. SAID THERE WAS SOME NEW CHARITY YOU HAD TO DISCUSS.

NOPE. I HAVEN'T TALKED TO HER ALL DAY. HOPE SHE'S ALL RIGHT.

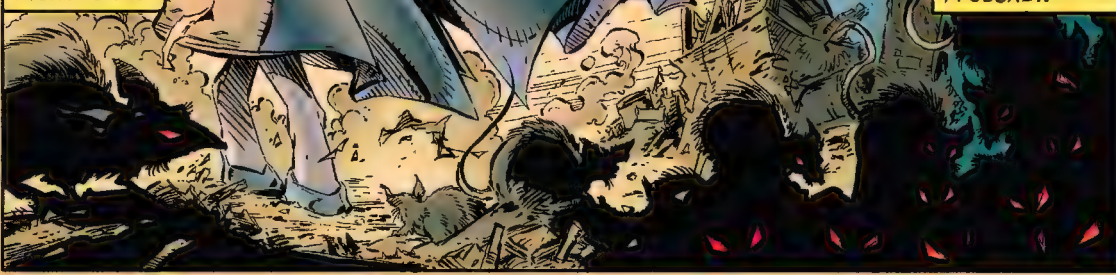
TERRY GOES STONE COLD SILENT. THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING ARE TOO HORRIFIC TO THINK ABOUT.



AS THE MINUTES TURN INTO HOURS, WANDA FINDS THE PATH LEADING TO SPAWN BLOCKED AT EVERY TURN.

THOUGH SHE'S QUESTIONED OVER THREE DOZEN OF THE HOMELESS, NOTHING HAS COME OF IT.

EITHER THIS CAPED VIGILANTE DOESN'T EXIST, OR THESE VAGRANTS HAVE AGREED TO KEEP HIS WHEREABOUTS A SECRET.



SHE CONTINUES HER SEARCH...

NEVER HEARD OF THE FELLER.

BUT IF IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE, I'D PUT ON A PAIR OF SHORTS TOO, IF IT MEANT YOU'D COME LOOKING FOR ME.

AND I'D LET YOU CATCH ME...

IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



RED CAPE?

→hic←

NOW THAT'S A GOOD ONE. PEOPLE 'ROUND HERE THINK I'M CRAZY... BUT A DUDE WITH SKULLS AND CRAP... THAT'S FUNNY!



YOU'VE GOT NO BUSINESS BEING IN THESE ALLEYS.



FINALLY, SHE RESORTS TO SIMPLER TACTICS...

... AND SHE QUICKLY FINDS A BELIEVER IN FREE AGENCY.



LADY, YOU JUST BOUGHT YOURSELF A TOUR GUIDE.





ARE YOU  
SURE  
THIS IS  
RIGHT?

TRUST  
ME,  
BABE.



UP  
THERE!

JUST  
AROUND  
THAT CORNER  
AND DOWN A  
BIT. YOU SHOULD  
FIND SOME-  
THING.

BUT *I*  
AIN'T GOING  
NEAR HIS  
SPOT. THE  
RED FREAK'S  
A *LUNATIC*.



"SO, YOU'RE ON  
YOUR OWN, LADY."

HELLO?

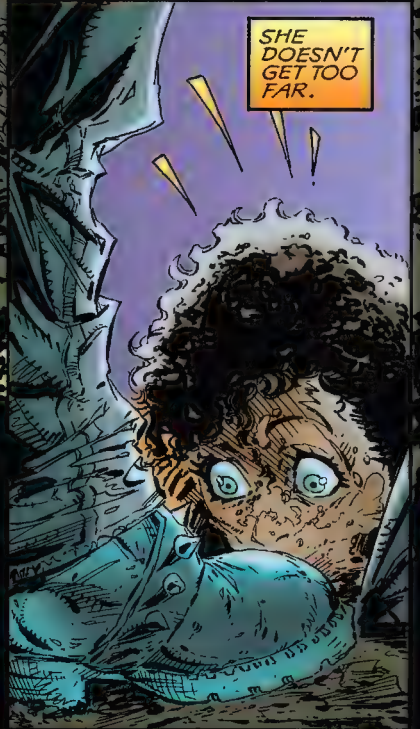
IS  
ANYONE  
HERE?



CAUTIOUSLY,  
SHE TURNS THE  
LAST CORNER.

GOD,  
**NO!**







MMMMMM!

YOU'RE  
A PRETTY  
ONE, TOO.

THAT'S JUST  
GOING TO BE A  
**BONUS!**

WHAT'RE  
YOU  
**DOING?!**

PLEASE  
DON'T...

GIMME  
GIMME.  
SHE'S  
MINE.

NO WAY,  
I SAW HER  
**FIRST!**

BOYS. **BOYS!**  
THERE'LL BE  
PLENTY OF TIME  
FOR **ALL**  
OF US!

**MOROW!**

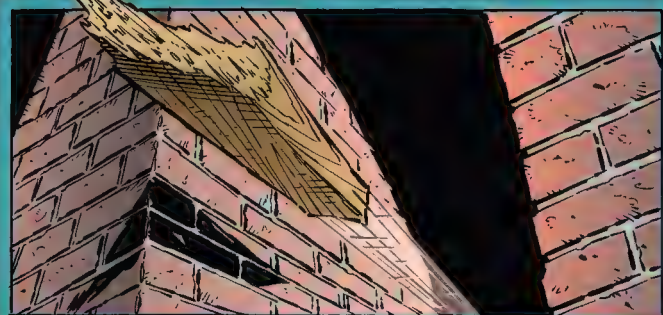
Uh?

FRIGGIN'  
CAT'S SURE  
SCARED  
OF **SOME-**  
THING.

WHO'S  
**IN**  
THERE?



I SAID,  
WHO'S IN  
THERE?!



WHUD!



SCARED AND CONFUSED,  
THE THIRD ASSAILANT  
DARTS INTO A SIDE ALLEY.


KRAK  
SNAP  
KRNCH

THE SICKENING SOUNDS OF  
BONES BREAKING AND  
CARTILAGE TEARING  
ASSAULT WANDA'S EARS.

THERE ISN'T A SCREAM TO  
ACCOMPANY ANY OF IT.

WHO'S  
NEXT?





HAUNTINGLY, HE EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS, A SPECTRE OF DEATH PREPARED-- EVEN WAITING-- FOR THE NEXT MOVE.

SEVERAL YEARS AS A C.I.A-TRAINED ASSASSIN TAUGHT HIM TO FEAR NOTHING.

ESPECIALLY NOW, IN HIS NEW LIFE, HE IS THE ONE TO INSTILL THE FEAR.

INFLECT THE PAIN.

BACK AWAY FROM THAT WOMAN.

**NOW!**

ANXIETY, DREAD, PANIC. ALL THE EMOTIONS SPAWN SOUGHT TO INSPIRE NOW SURGE THROUGH THIS FINAL STANDING GANG MEMBER.

HAVING PULLED THE JAGGED SHARD FROM HIS LEG, THE THUG REACTS INSTINCTIVELY.

**BACK OFF, MAN! OR SHE BUYS IT!!**

HOW DARE YOU...

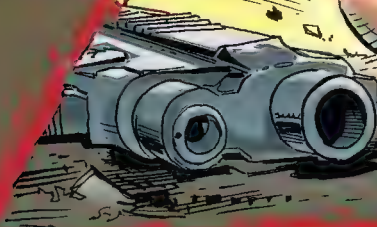
...THREATEN ME?!





**KRK**  
**KRAK**  
**KAK**  
**KK**

THE THUMB WILL BE  
THE ONLY USEABLE  
DIGIT ON HIS RIGHT  
HAND AFTER TONIGHT.







FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE WAS FOUR YEARS OLD, DOUGIE "MAD DOG" GILMOUR WETS HIS PANTS AND DOESN'T CARE.



DEAR LORD.

GET OUTTA MY SIGHT.



I-I'M SORRY...  
I DIDN'T MEAN  
FOR ANY OF THIS  
TO HAPPEN.



YOU OKAY, LADY?  
NEXT TIME,  
YOU MIGHT  
WANT TO PAY  
ATTENTION TO  
WHERE YOU'RE  
WALKING.



WANDA?!





HOW...

HOW  
DO YOU  
KNOW  
TERRY  
AND I?

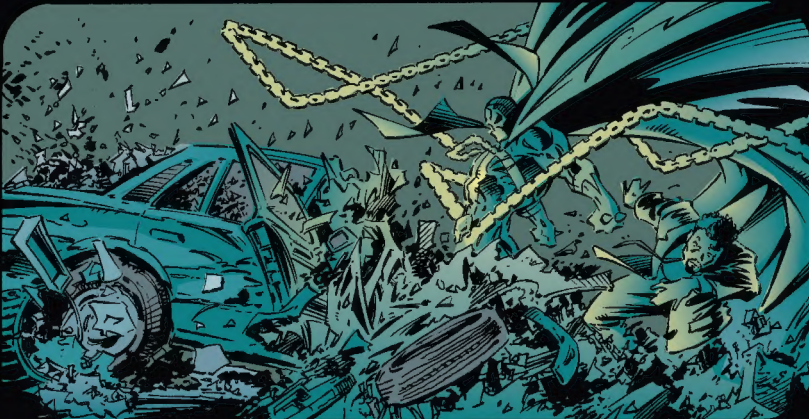
WHO  
ARE  
YOU?

SOMEONE  
WHO  
CARES.





"WHEN ALL OF THIS WAS GOING ON, I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE ANY OF IT. TERRY, BEING INVESTIGATED BY INTERNAL AFFAIRS... DEAD MEN, CONNECTED TO THE MAFIA, ON MY FRONT LAWN... TERRY BLAMED FOR THE MURDERS!... EVERYONE HAD TURNED ON HIM.



"HE NEARLY DIED FROM THE BEATING OVERTKILL GAVE HIM. HE'S ALIVE, THOUGH-- THANKS TO YOU, YOUR HELP SAVED HIS LIFE. \*

"I COULDN'T BEAR TO LOSE HIM. I LOVE HIM SO MUCH. WE HAVE A LITTLE GIRL, BUT YOU PROBABLY KNOW THAT...





... SHE NEEDS  
HER DAD. SO  
**VERY** MUCH.  
WE **BOTH** DO.

BUT...

I...

YOU  
**SCARE** ME.  
I KNOW I  
SHOULD BE  
**GRATEFUL** TO  
YOU FOR SAYING  
ME TONIGHT,  
BUT WHAT  
YOU DID--  
IT...

IT  
LOOKED  
LIKE YOU  
**ENJOYED**  
YOURSELF.  
THAT'S  
**SCARING**  
ME.

PLEASE,  
WANDA,  
DON'T TURN  
AWAY. I AM  
HERE TO  
HELP.



HE RAISES HIS  
HAND, TO WIPE  
SOME MUD FROM  
HER CHEEK.

SHE RECOILS,  
FEARING THAT  
HE IS ABOUT  
TO STRIKE HER.



YOU'RE  
THAT  
AFRAID  
OF ME?

I'M  
SORRY.

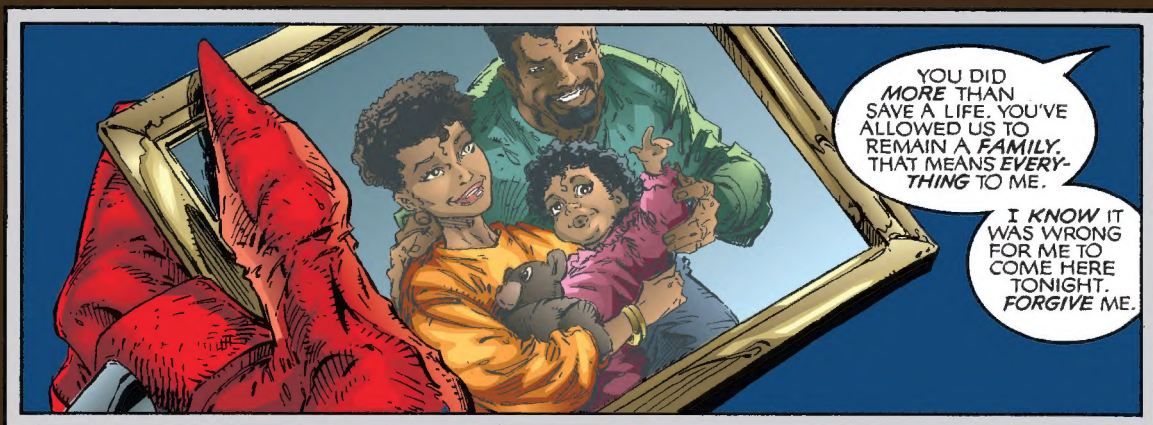
NO.  
THIS  
IS MY  
FAULT.

HERE,  
BEFORE  
I GO...



I  
WANT  
YOU  
TO HAVE  
SOME-  
THING.





YOU DID MORE THAN SAVE A LIFE. YOU'VE ALLOWED US TO REMAIN A **FAMILY**. THAT MEANS **EVERYTHING** TO ME.

I KNOW IT WAS WRONG FOR ME TO COME HERE TONIGHT. **FORGIVE ME.**

I WON'T COME BACK. **EVER AGAIN.**

WAIT, WANDA...

PLEASE.

LATER.

HE'S BEEN STARING AT THE PHOTO FOR THREE HOURS.

IT'LL BE ANOTHER TWO BEFORE HE PUTS IT DOWN.



7:0:1:2





Tyrant  
Lizard  
King

EMPIRE